The Choice of a College

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THE CHOICE OF A COLLEGE FOR A BOY

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THE CHOICE OF A COLLEGE

FOR A BOY.

Parents too often choose a college for a son without special thought or knowledge. To many people a college is a college, as a spade is a spade. But the slightest reflection, or the most superficial knowledge, is sufficient to produce the conviction that colleges differ as fundamentally as any other products of human skill. Certain institutions that bear the name of college advance the student to no higher stage of learning or culture than other colleges require for admission to their freshman class.

It is also evident that too many parents do not select a college with special reference to the conditions or the needs of the son who is going to college. It is often thought that a college good for one boy must be good for all boys. The truth is not that the college which is one boy's meat is another boy's poison, but the truth is that a college good for one boy may be something less than good or even something more than good for another boy.

Before beginning the discussion of the elements that should constitute the choice of a college, it is not unfitting for me to say it is always to be understood that to the parent selecting a college for a child the college is a tool and not a product. It is an agent and not a result. It represents a certain collection of men who are engaged in the work of teaching students, and it also rep-

resents a certain number of books and a certain amount of apparatus which are the conditions or the tools which the teaching force uses in the accomplishment of its purposes. The college is so constantly and so firmly regarded as a thing good in itself that one should be put on his guard against thinking of the college as other than an agency for securing certain results.

CITY OR COUNTRY?

One of the first questions which a parent considers in selecting a college for his boy relates to its location. Nearly all the colleges in the United States are, like the Jerusalem of David, beautiful for situation. In fact, colleges have usually been planted in certain spots because of the beauty of the proposed location. It is also evident that to the natural beauty of the location their presence makes additions. The situation is usually one of healthfulness. But the special question that the parent has to answer is the question whether he shall send his boy to the college in the country or to the college in the city. About four-fifths of all the colleges in the United States are country colleges. Whether the country or the city is the best place for a college is one of those questions which educators are constantly discussing. The arguments upon each side are not difficult to state. In behalf of the rural location, it is constantly said that the personal expenses of the student are in the country less than in the city. It is also argued that the country promotes freedom from certain moral temptations. The declaration is frequently made that the country gives larger freedom for certain social recreations and forms of amusement. It is constantly and worthily asserted that the association with nature through the country college is more intimate and precious. In be-

half of the urban situation, it is argued that the student is able to come into association with the best life of humanity of every kind. The mightiest life of the nation pours into the city. Here the best preachers have their pulpits; here the best lecturers bring themselves and their messages; here the best influences of art and of every form of noble enjoyment cluster; here the association of man with man is more intimate and more formative of the best character. It is also said that the enjoyment of nature is more intense to one who spends a part of his energies and time amidst the works of man than to one who is remote from the most active human interests. The contrast between the works of God and the works of man flings man sharply into the profoundest appreciation of natural scenes.

Between these two sets of arguments it is not necessary for me to be an arbiter, any further than to say that in my judgment, for the ordinary boy the college in the city, or the college on the borders of a city, is, on the whole, to be preferred. Probably the absolutely best location is that of a college in the suburbs of a great city. In such an environment the student is able to secure communion with nature and also association with great movements and with large life. But upon the choice of a rural or an urban college, the parent should not decide without a careful consideration of the needs of his child. In not a few instances it is well for one who has been born and bred in the city, and who will probably live his life in the city, to spend four years in a distinctly country environment. For him the country college may be the best, in case he is willing to accept its conditions. But, on the other hand, for one who has been born and bred in the country, the life of the city itself is a very direct aid in giving him the

best education. For a boy, country-born and country-bred, to go to a country college does not represent that change of scene and of influence which it is best for him usually to receive.

SCHOLARSHIP.

A second question which is worthy of most serious consideration relates to the scholarly character of the college. The type of scholarship to which a college is devoted may be of either one or both of two sorts. It may be the scholarship of research, or it may be the scholarship of and for teaching. The scholarship of research is in many ways more important than the scholarship of teaching, but such scholarship belongs more properly to the university than to the ordinary college. It therefore does not fall directly within the circle of our present investigation. But in America these two kinds of scholarship are usually combined. The college that is distinguished for its scientific or linguistic research gains distinction as a worthy place for the teaching of youth. But the scholarship that is devoted to the service of teaching represents an element which is of far greater value to the parent in search of a college than the scholarship of research. It is precisely at this point that American colleges differ from each other by diameters of incalculable length. It is also at this point that most parents are in peril of lacking evidence for making just decisions. The evidence that is usually presented to a parent seeking to know the scholarly conditions of a college consists of the statements found in the official publications of the college, such as catalogues, or in the statements made by the students themselves. Such evidence is notoriously inadequate. There are catalogues that tell the truth, and nothing

but the truth, and I am sure that most makers of catalogues desire and design to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; but the authorities of some colleges allow themselves to be deceived in respect to the relative worth of the scholarly facilities which they are able to offer to students. The college mind is in peril of provincialism. So great is the work which any college accomplishes for its students, and so great is the work which each teacher accomplishes for his individual students, that both the college and its professors are inclined to believe that they are doing as much as any other college in the world can do for its men. Whereas the fact may be that the scholarly character of one college is richer and higher and nobler than the scholarly character of another college by a degree as great as that which divides the last year in the grammar school from the last year in the high school. To illustrate the difference in the scholarly character of colleges let me set down side by side the courses of study in Harvard College in the academic year 1871–1872 with the course of study in the same college twenty-five years after. At the earlier time the titles of the courses of study in the college occupied eight pages as printed in the catalogue for the following year. In the year 1896–1897 the titles of the courses of study occupied sixty pages. In the year 1871–1872 were offered two courses in political science, five courses in philosophy, and five courses in history. Twenty-five years afterward were offered in political science, — including economics and government, — thirty courses; in philosophy, twenty-six courses; and in history, twenty-four courses. Although certain of these courses are designed primarily for graduates, yet this fact does not appreciably lessen the force of the comparison. The simple truth is that

scores of colleges, and good ones too, are not so rich to-day in scholarly resources as Harvard College was twenty-five years ago. The same difference that is made evident between the Harvard of 1871–1872 and the Harvard of 1896–1897 exists in colleges of each of our great States at the present time. Now, the point which I wish to make is that the college that is richest in scholarly resources is, other things being equal, the best college. But, of course, other things are not equal.

In discussing the scholarship of a college the parent must be influenced somewhat by the consideration whether the courses of study are largely prescribed or largely or entirely elective. There can be no doubt that the general system described by the epithet "elective" is to become permanent. The extent to which it should be introduced, and therefore the extent to which its presence in the college should influence the parent, depends very largely upon the degree of knowledge and of maturity that the student possesses upon entering college. If he is mature, and if he has read as much of the ancient and the modern classics at the close of his course in the high school as many a college youth fifty years ago had read at the close of his sophomore year, it is well to grant to him a pretty free choice of electives in his college years. But if in the college it is necessary for him to devote his first year and possibly part of his second year to the doing of work that other college men have done in the high school, he should of course be limited to a prescribed course of study in the first semesters. Yet there can be no doubt that the colleges which do offer the largest range of elective studies are the colleges that are richest in scholarship and scholastic resources; for without such wealth of resources they could not present a great variety and

number of elective courses. For the elective system gathers up knowledge from all fields. It makes extensive forays into the fields of learning as it also makes expensive ones into the fields of finance.

MEN BEFORE METHODS.

It is not, however, the simple scholastic resources of the college which have value. The teacher that stands behind the teaching, — the man that was before the scholar and who helps to constitute the scholar, — is more important than the teaching or the scholarship. Therefore in judging of different colleges it is certainly of extreme importance that one should know or know of the teachers. A college that is not rich in scholarly resources may yet have great teachers, — men great to make men. Williams College, for instance, was for many years a great power in the life of New England and of the whole nation, and of course it is now, and Williams College was not rich in scholarly resources, but Williams College made men largely through that prince of men, — Mark Hopkins. Graduate after graduate of Amherst College has testified that the best thing that Amherst College did for him was Julius H. Seelye. Likewise many a college, poor in purse, meagre in scholastic equipment, has given a most precious life to its graduates through the vitality of its teachers. As the student in college, in choosing his electives, selects not so much the subject as the teacher, so also the parent choosing a college for a son should be influenced quite as much by the teacher as by the scholarship of the college.

The scholarly and personal character of a college has value in respect to the purpose which the parent may entertain for his son. I presume that most parents when

they think of the future of a child, think of it in a very general way: "I want him to be a good boy; I want him to grow up to be a good man," represents the most common thought. But when a parent begins to be specific in his purposes he will probably find that he desires to have his son become either a scholar, or a thinker, or a worthy citizen, or a gentleman. These purposes help somewhat to determine the choice of a college. To make a scholar, the scholarly college is of pre-eminent value; to make a thinker, the college whose faculty is composed of intellectual disciplinarians is of pre-eminent value; to make a good citizen, the college whose faculty is composed of men of vitality in close touch with life is of pre-eminent value; to make a gentleman, the college whose faculty is composed of men who are noble gentlemen, living in an atmosphere of culture, is of pre-eminent value.

RELIGIOUS INFLUENCES.

To many persons the religious, or the moral and religious, character of a college emerges more prominently than the scholarly character. I think it may frankly be said that most persons entertain a fear of the influence of the college upon their sons. The fear arises possibly not so much from the character of the college as from the fact that the child is going away from his home into new and partially unknown surroundings. The fear would be none the less if he were going to New York into a banker's office on Wall Street than if he were going to New York to enter Columbia College at One Hundred and Twentieth Street. But also the fear may have some basis on the ground that certain people think the college is intrinsically and inherently bad; that is, some parents believe that certain students

in the college have a bad influence on each other. It was only yesterday that a mother said to me, "I was so fearful for my boy to come to college, for I was afraid of the bad boys." I replied to her, "We have no bad boys in college;" and my remark was true in general. There are fewer bad boys in the American colleges than in any other gathering of American youth of similar size. The impression that the college has many bad boys arises from the attention paid by the newspapers to the pranks which college boys perpetrate. College pranks, I know, are not signs of regenerating grace; they are signs simply of a surplus of animal spirits. Stealing the tongue of the college bell, sending the Bible of the college chapel from Cambridge to New Haven, the *hooking* and the hiding of the gates of professors' houses, are not acts to be commended. They are acts to be condemned; but they are not to be condemned in the same way nor to the same degree that lying, or forgery, or drunkenness is to be condemned. In a word, the American college represents a moral environment, a moral activity, and a moral atmosphere. It represents, too, an environment, activity, and atmosphere of a constantly increasing moral vigor and worth. Verdant greenness, moral foolishness, and ethical imbecility are there less frequently exhibited than they used to be. These defects and deficiencies never had that place in American college life which they played in the career of Mr. Verdant Green at the English university. The religious life also of the American college is far more pervasive and vital than it usually receives credit for. Not far from two-thirds of the students in the American colleges are members of Christian churches. The Christian life of the college has changed in these last years. Revivals are far less common than they were. Few col-

leges now take special means for the promotion of revivals, as many colleges used to do. Few colleges now suspend college work for the sake of holding revivals, as many colleges formerly suspended college work for days, if not for weeks together, for this purpose. But the absence of revivals does not prove that the Christian life of the students is less vital than two generations ago. On the contrary, the Christian life in the colleges is more vital, more natural, and more constant than in the former time. The endeavor is not at the present to make the college man religious, but the endeavor is to make a religious college man; the endeavor is not to make the student Christian, but the endeavor is to make a Christian student.

There can be no doubt but that certain colleges do pay more conspicuous attention to the religious and moral character of their students than do others. But of all colleges it is the supreme concern. The words which the great Sir Walter spoke to his son-in-law as he lay dying, — "Lockhart, be a good man, be a good man," — illustrate what each college has for its highest purpose. It wishes to form the noblest character.

Colleges differ by world-wide differences in respect to their method of securing the highest character. One college attempts to secure this result through a definite and comprehensive system of rules and regulations. It attempts to govern the conduct of the student each day, from the hour he gets out of bed in the morning till the hour of his getting into bed at night. It requires him to partake of his breakfast at a certain specified time, to be in his room and engaged in study between certain specified hours, as well as to be at recitations and lectures at certain times. It forbids him to leave town or to venture into certain districts. In a word, the college

is an overseer, a guardian. Other colleges adopt a wholly different method. They adopt the method of the parent in reference to the youth of eighteen or twenty who is of ordinary maturity and of good habits. The college trusts the boy. It receives him as one who has come to college to get the benefits which college can give. It accepts him at his best. It receives him as a gentleman. It requires his attendance at recitations. It holds him to a certain standard of scholastic attainment. It sets before him worthy examples in the person of its teachers. It asks him to make the most of every opportunity. Each of these two methods has its advantages. Which is the better, I, for one, have no question. Each method may secure excellent results. Under either method, too, the boy who is determined to be bad will be bad. But under both systems one can give to himself the advantage of believing, as is said in the "Vicar of Wakefield" (chapter v.) that "Virtue which requires to be ever guarded is scarce worth the sentinel."

THE DENOMINATIONAL COLLEGE.

The religious character of a college is represented to most people in its denominational character. Christianity has usually as an organized force articulated itself into denominations.

The great majority of the colleges in this country are denominational. It is sometimes asserted that a college cannot be Christian without being denominational. The remark is, however, not true. The value of the denominational college in the early stages of a community is great, but as the country develops its value rapidly diminishes. If one desire that his son shall be trained in certain denominational tenets, it may be worth while

for him to send the son to a college of that denomination in the tenets of which he desires his son to be trained. But if he simply desire that his son shall embody and represent what is known as Christian manhood, the denominational relations of the college should have no value. The denominational character is more marked in certain colleges than in others even of the same denomination. Colleges, too, of those ecclesiastical faiths which are the more highly organized are more highly denominational than of those faiths which are more loosely organized. For instance, colleges of the Methodist or of the Presbyterian faith are more clearly Methodist or Presbyterian than colleges which are of the Congregational faith are Congregational. Yale, Amherst, and Williams are sometimes called Congregational colleges; but the Congregational relations of these colleges are far less conspicuous than the Methodist relations of the many colleges which have the word Wesleyan prefixed as a part, or as constituting the whole, of their name. For one, I venture to say that the denominational character of a college should have no or only small value with any one who is searching for a first-rate college. The chief, I may almost say the only, element to be considered in this general relation is the element: "Is the college Christian? Does the college through the person of its professors, through the instruction of its class-rooms, through its government, and through all its conditions and agencies, tend to promote the formation of that type of manhood which is embodied in the word Christian?" And this type of manhood the best college does desire to promote, not for ecclesiastical or for any narrow reason, but because the Christian type represents the highest, the fullest, and the largest type of manhood.

THE SMALL VS. THE LARGE COLLEGE.

A fourth element in our question emerges. It relates to the size of the college. Arguments for small colleges and arguments for large colleges abound, and there are worthy arguments for each proposition. But in this, as in other elements, the choice is to be made not simply upon the intrinsic ground of the facts, but upon the ground of the relation of the facts to the boy who is going to college. The advantage of the college of many students is that that part of education which consists in the attrition or formative influence which students give to each other is greater. The men of a large college come from a greater variety of conditions, and represent larger and more diverse elements in character. They therefore rub against each other with more severity. The tendency to produce a more composite type of manhood is stronger. The disadvantage of the college of many students is that the teacher is frequently obliged to instruct a larger number of students than he ought. Every college officer knows that the addition of each new student may impoverish the college. The fees paid for his tuition do not meet the cost of his tuition. Therefore as a college increases in the number of its students the tendency of the governing bodies is not to increase the teaching force in a corresponding ratio. The *Harvard Graduates' Magazine* for December, 1896, notes as occurring in that college the consolidation of two sections in Spanish which made a section of over eighty men. This consolidation became necessary because of illness; but for many teachers a class of even forty students is altogether too large. I recognize, of course, that certain teachers can instruct and educate a section of eighty men better than others can one of

twenty. As a rule, a teacher should have no more men in a class than he, so to speak, can hold in his eye. On the whole, the larger colleges are allowing themselves to suffer and their students to suffer because of too big sections. This result is not a necessary one; for, if the college should increase the number of its teaching force in the same proportion in which the number of its students increases, no evil would result. That the college ought so to do is evident; but it is the fact that the ordinary college does not usually so do. It is also to be said that the advantage arising from the presence of a great number of students is not so great as is usually supposed; for every large college divides itself into cliques or sets of men, and every division may keep itself pretty closely to itself. I have, for instance, known a man in one of our largest colleges to say: "I find college life so lonely!" The advantage of the small college is that the relatively few students and the relatively large number of teachers tend to promote intimacy of relationship between those who sit behind the teacher's desk and those who sit on the benches before it. This advantage is of very great worth. For, as I read the lives of the men trained in American colleges who have rendered great service to American life, I find them far more frequently attributing value to the influences of their teachers than to the teachings themselves. The disadvantage of the small college, be it said, is provincialism. The choice between the large and the small college is therefore one that should be made with great deliberation, having special reference to the character of the boy to whom the education is to be given.

THE COST OF A COLLEGE EDUCATION.

Possibly the first question which a parent asks himself is one as to the cost. Certain colleges to which he might be glad to send his boy he regards as closed because of the expense. In a general way the cost of a college education can be easily settled. Certain colleges exhibit in their catalogues four scales of annual expenses, denominating them, "low," "moderate," "liberal," and "very liberal." The same conditions obtain within the college that obtain out of the college. I consider that for a boy of good habits, of high aims, appreciating properly the purchasing power of money, this is a fair method of estimating what he ought to spend in college: Add together the fee for tuition, the fee for room and for board, multiply the resulting sum by two, and you have what it is best for him to spend. It is wise for him to spend this sum to get the best out of the college, to live the most vital life in the college, to have the largest number of interests, to be the most useful, and to form a character that shall fit itself most exactly and fully into the conditions which he may be called upon to fill. Many a boy in college spends very much less than what is best for him to spend; he is obliged to spend very much less. Yet it is far better for him to come to college and to be economical, — economical even to the danger point of suffering and of decency, — than not to come at all. Not a few boys also come to college who spend very much more than twice the expense for the three fundamental elements of tuition, room, and board. The larger number of boys of lavish expenditures are gravely injured through these extravagances. Upon the basis which I have indicated, one can go to excellent colleges upon a sum not exceeding three hun-

dred and fifty dollars, and receive the largest benefits. One can go to certain colleges and be obliged to spend at the very least three hundred and fifty dollars; one can get a first-rate education at certain colleges, too, for as small a sum as two hundred; but the basis I have indicated contains the essential elements for making a judgment.

The question of cost has relation also to the aid which the college can give to the man of light purse and of heavy brain, and also to the opportunities for self-support. For every college has scholarships or aid funds, which are grants made for the use of good students. Every college also is able to offer to certain men means of self-support. At this point the advantage that the city college enjoys is greatly superior to that possessed by the country college. I know not a few students who through the grants made by the college in the shape of loans or gifts, or through certain work that the college puts into their hands, are meeting all their expenses. Be it said, too, that most men of this sort are men of large ability and the highest promise. In a word, it may be said that, however worth educating or needy of education the rich man may be, — and he is worth educating and he needs education, — it is of the utmost importance for the best interests of America that the poor boy of ability shall be educated. Many a college president stands ready to help the boy of strong body, of light purse, of pure heart, of good brain, and of high purposes to an education. A boy should never give up the hope of a college education on the ground of poverty.

EASTERN COLLEGES AND WESTERN.

There is another question frequently emerging which is worthy of discussion. The remark is often heard

among families living in the central or remote West that their sons are going East to college. The belief is common and strong that the colleges of the East are better than the colleges of the West. The primary differences prevailing between the colleges of the East and the colleges of the West are the differences that divide the older civilization from the younger. Possibly I may say that the differences between the Eastern and the Western colleges are not so great by any manner of means as are the differences between the older and the younger civilization. For education does not know latitude and longitude as do certain elements of civilization. Certain facts are clear. Few students go from the East to the West for an education; not a few go from the West to the East. Although more than one-half of the students in almost every one of our American colleges come from towns within the States in which those colleges are situated, and although in not a few instances the larger part of the students come from within a radius of seventy-five miles of the college, yet no small proportion of the students in the colleges of Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Jersey are drawn from west of the Alleghany Mountains. Certain differences are evident enough. The colleges of the West are more inclined to emphasize the scientific and mathematical studies of the curriculum; and the colleges of the East are more inclined to emphasize the linguistic and philosophical and historical studies. The colleges of the West have more students who are earning their way. The colleges of the East, on the whole, make the larger grants of scholarship and of other beneficiary funds. But it is more fundamental to say that the colleges of the East have, on the whole, more great scholars than the colleges of the West. They also are better equipped

in scholastic apparatus; their libraries are larger and more adequate; their means for scholarly investigation are richer. But also it is to be affirmed that the teaching of the undergraduate classes in the best colleges of the West is as good as the teaching of the undergraduate classes in the best colleges of the East. Because of the larger libraries and the more adequate scientific equipment, the facilities available in the colleges of the East for doing graduate work are superior to those afforded by the colleges of the West; but for ordinary undergraduate work the best colleges of several of the Western States are as amply equipped as are the better colleges of the Atlantic seaboard. It is held by some that the colleges of the East tend to make the gentleman more than the colleges of the West. Within a few days a man asked me: "Why do the men of the Eastern colleges seem so different from the men of the Western colleges?" The inquiry represents a superficial observation. The inquirer was probably comparing the type of gentleman formed in the ordinary college of the West with the type of the gentleman formed in the best colleges of the older commonwealths. It is also to be said that the type of the gentleman who emerges from the college depends a good deal upon the type of gentleman that comes into the college. But, given equal advantages before one goes to college, the best colleges of several of the Western States are as well fitted to make a gentleman as are the better colleges of the older part of the country.

SEX IN EDUCATION.

What are the relative advantages for a man — and in this paper I am discussing the student who is a man — of the college which is open to women as well as to men, and of the college that is open to men only;

this is a question that the ordinary parent considers with at least some degree of care. It is a question which he does consider with even greater care in reference to the education of his daughter. He debates whether it is best to send his daughter to a college where there are men or to a college where there are women only, but for his son it is usually a minor matter. The question of co-education has sometimes been regarded as a question involving the question of duty. The question of co-education is simply a question of expediency. That it is wise to give as rich opportunities to women as to men to secure the highest education is evident. The community ought, therefore, to give to women opportunities for securing the highest education by the wisest, most efficient, and most economical means and methods. When a community is new and poor — and most new communities are poor — it may seem to be extravagant to found colleges for men only, and also for women only. Therefore colleges are founded for both men and women. But when a community becomes richer and larger, and many colleges are established, it is certainly open to argument that it may be wise to found colleges for women only and also colleges for men only. Therefore the question of co-education is not a question of duty, but a question only of expediency. It is often, too, a question of taste. That some men are advantaged by association with women in the same class-room is clear. That certain men are harmed from this association is also clear. That the association tends to increase the respect which certain men pay to women is, I believe, a fact of experience. That the association, too, tends to diminish the respect which certain other men pay to womanhood is also, I believe, a fact of observation. But there is one and only one important element in this con-

dition to which I wish to allude: In the co-educational college and because of the co-educational feature, the life of the men is usually more subjected to rules and regulations than it is in the college for men only. (The same condition applies to women too.)

COLLEGE REQUIREMENTS.

In judging of the worth of a college, the element of the amount of work demanded and the severity of the tasks imposed upon the student have great value. It is said that certain colleges are hard to get into but easy to stay in, and that other colleges are easy to get into but hard to stay in. If one must choose between these two conditions, I am sure that the college which is easy to get into and hard to stay in is the better. The college ought to hold its students up to a very high standard of scholarship; and that college is doing the most for the sons of any home which demands long-continued and severe intellectual labor. One peril besetting the college student is the peril of indolence. One of the best things that a college can do for a man is to aid him in forming the habit of hard work. That college, therefore, which makes it difficult for any man to stay in college who does not spend eight hours each day upon his mental tasks (including recitations), is rendering to that man a service of the utmost value. It is a service the worth of which he will appreciate more and more as he becomes a laborer in this great world of labor. Instead of being obliged to make a choice between the college to which entrance is difficult and abiding in easy, and the college to which entrance is easy and abiding in difficult, the choice should be so changed as to relate to the one college into which entrance and in which abiding are both easy, and to the

other college into which entrance and in which abiding are difficult. The peril of American life is mediocrity. The college ought to do much in upholding the highest standards of admission and the highest standards of scholarship and of general excellence.

THE DORMITORY SYSTEM AND COLLEGE COMMONS.

A further inquiry, which relates to an important element of college life, is the question whether the student shall room in the college dormitory or in a private family. The American college is modelled more closely upon the English university college-system than upon any other educational foundation. Therefore the ordinary and older American college has dormitories. The newer American colleges have, in respect to the housing of their students, been more inclined to follow the German than the English method. Few State universities have put up buildings for the housing of their students. It has sometimes been thought that the dormitory system was disappearing from the American college-life; but recently the University of Pennsylvania has built large dormitories, and in connection with the new buildings of Columbia University houses for students may be erected. To many men the college dormitory represents an important element in college life. Not only is it a lingering element of the conventual system, but it also embodies a distinct experience. No small share of the good of a college course to the student is the intimacy of the friendships which it promotes. When men have their lodgings under one roof, and within one set of four walls, they come into those relations which tend to promote strong friendships. To study the same subjects, to eat at the same table, to sleep and to dream under the same conditions, to love

and to hate the same things, represent means for causing men to give inspiration and culture and education to each other. The disadvantage of dormitory life consists simply or largely in the tendency to break up habits of study. This result is a part of that wiping out of individuality which happens when the character is not sufficiently strong to bear attrition or strain. A man living with other men finds that his time is less his own than when he lives alone. This difficulty it is, of course, possible to avoid or to overcome, but it is a difficulty. On the whole, however, I think it is best for a college man, at least for a while, to have that college experience known as "living in the dormitory."

It is also well, I think, for a man to share with his fellows in the college commons. Colleges adopt different means and methods for the feeding of students. In certain instances the colleges take no means for providing for the students; students arrange through private boarding-houses or through clubs for themselves. But whatever interests the student interests the college; and therefore the college is always eager for the students to have good board, under the best conditions. College men are usually poor; and therefore the college, in its eagerness to help them, does whatever it can to secure good board at the cheapest prices. The best condition usually is that in which the men form a club on their own responsibility, but under general college supervision. Through such an arrangement they are able to have the advantage of each other's companionship. They are able, also, to secure food under collegiate conditions, and they are able to secure it at the cheapest price. The price, of course, varies. I am intimately acquainted with colleges at which simple but nutritious board is had at two dollars a week. From

this sum the price rises to five or six or more dollars. The average price for board at all colleges does not exceed three dollars and a half a week.

THE FRATERNITY QUESTION.

Before the student is admitted to college, he probably has reflected upon the question of whether he shall join a fraternity. Certainly, if he has not been obliged to consider this question before he has received his matriculation papers, he will find himself obliged to consider it soon after he has begun work. The Greek Letter fraternities, as they have come to be known, represent a very large element in American college life. For more than fifty years they have played an important *rôle*. It is apparent that they are to be permanent factors. Of them are more than fifty, which have chapters in many colleges. There are also local fraternities. The foundation of some of them runs back more than sixty years. Various purposes control and various methods prevail. In some the literary purpose and motive, in some the oratorical, in some the scholastic; but more generally and quite commonly the social and friendly method and purpose dominate. College fraternities are becoming, more and more, simple associations of men who like each other, and who wish to be associated with each other. Whether a student shall join one depends very largely upon the student, and also upon the fraternity which he may be asked to join. On the whole, I feel confident that if he can afford the expense, — and the expense in some cases is slight, and in others heavy, — he will get more out of his college life by being a member. He will form more numerous, more ardent, and more lasting friendships. The disadvantage of fraternities is pretty closely related to what is called col-

lege politics. College politics, on the whole, is quite as bad for the college as what is known as "politics" in the larger world of civil relations is bad for pure democratic government. For the bickerings and squabblings prevailing in college politics consume large amounts of time and strength without rendering adequate results. But the same temptation of going into college politics exists for the man who is not a member of a fraternity.

ATHLETICS.

There is a further field of effort which the college man will be invited to enter. This field is represented by athletics. But, unlike the fraternities, one's entrance into this form of enjoyment is more individual than in the case of the societies. "Shall my son play foot-ball?" is a question which the parent asks himself. For foot-ball represents the specific form of college athletics which emerges most conspicuously before the mind of the college boy and his parent. If the boy be of a strong body and in fairly good health, I should answer without hesitation "Yes." "To what extent shall he play foot-ball?" is another question and one more difficult to answer. Never is it to be forgotten that the primary purpose of the college is to make the thinker, the scholar, the citizen, the gentleman. Never also is it to be forgotten that in securing these four purposes, the student is to possess a strong body. Man is so made that usually he cannot become the broadest and keenest thinker, or the largest scholar, or the most useful citizen, or the highest type of a gentleman, unless he have a strong body. In order to secure a strong body exercise is necessary. In order to secure the best kind of exercise, enjoyment of the exercise is necessary. In

order to secure the enjoyment of exercise, the presence of others taking the same exercise is advantageous. All these various purposes and methods are best met, on the whole, by foot-ball.

But of course foot-ball, or, indeed, any form of athletics, does not exist for itself. It is a means to an end, — a method for making the thinker, the scholar, the citizen, the gentleman. The peril is that the interest which attaches to foot-ball as a means may become attached to it as an end in itself. In this case it becomes an unworthy part of the college discipline and training. That certain men are injured for college work by their indulgence in foot-ball is at once to be granted. That many men are very much benefited by playing foot-ball is also to be affirmed. The men who are benefited are of the sluggish type. They are the men who need to be taught to think and to act quickly. The men also who are benefited are of the individualistic type. They should be taught to work in co-operation and in harmony with their associates. The American college has put before itself a very important and interesting problem, — to urge the men to participate in sports and in all forms of athletic amusement without participating to an improper extent.

By and for each college the question is to be settled on those grounds which it judges are best for its students to stand upon. That Yale or Princeton becomes more popular with the people by reason of a foot-ball victory, or that Harvard becomes less popular by a defeat, is not to be considered as an element of the question. It is a very open question how far parents are persuaded to send their children to colleges that win in foot-ball, base-ball, or boating by these athletic victories. Certainly some parents find reason for sending their

sons to colleges that are not victorious in these sports. But each college is to adopt such rules and regulations in sports as will cause its students to participate generally in the sports, and to do all it can to cause no student to devote too large or too eager attention to any sport.

It is also to be said that the health of American college men was never so good as it is to-day. The disease of dyspepsia — that bane of the student of forty years ago — is now uncommon. College men are more healthy on that day when they stand together on the commencement platform than on the day when the same men as freshmen gathered together for their first class-meeting. This increase in the vigor of the typical college man has been derived in no small degree from the presence of athletics in college life.

In addition to the athletic sports, every well-equipped college has a gymnasium, in which in all seasons of the year, and especially in those seasons in which out-door sports cannot be indulged in, the student ought to be a constant and happy attendant. In certain colleges he is obliged to take exercise; in other colleges exercise is a matter of his own volition. But four or five times a week, for at least half an hour each time, he ought to be found in the gymnasium. That student who works the hardest, and who hopes to make the most out of life, ought to be the most severe with himself in demanding that he take constant and adequate exercise in the gymnasium.

The student who thus exercises, and who sleeps eight hours each night, will have small reason to ask himself a question which he often asks himself, and which parents often ask for their sons; to wit, "How much ought my son to study each day?" The student of good con-

stitution, who takes good care of himself, can usually work sixty hours a week. But few students do work this amount. Forty or fifty hours a week is much nearer the average. But for one who is eager and strong and ambitious, and who lives in simplicity, sixty hours a week, or ten hours a day for six days a week, should not be regarded as an exorbitant amount. But for men to exceed this amount, as certain men do, — although to exceed sixty hours a week was formerly more common than it is now, — is to approach the danger line.

STUDENT MIGRATIONS.

A question that the parent often asks is this: "Is it well for my son to take his entire course at a single college?" From German university to German university, the German student migrates. In American colleges students seldom migrate. The man who enters a freshman graduates a senior. The lessening number of the men in a class is usually caused by men dropping out by reason of lack of scholarship, of sickness, or poverty, or of going into business. I am inclined to think that the American custom is wise: it is usually well to take the entire course at one college. The man who enters a class after the first year, enters at a disadvantage for the forming of intimate friendships. He never feels himself as being quite a full-fledged member of the collegiate family. To be sure he *can* change colleges. Most colleges accept students from other colleges upon the presentation of clean papers, indicating that they are honorably dismissed, and also indicating the amount and quality of the work that has been done. It would, of course, be difficult for a man from a third-rate college to secure admission to Princeton, or to any other first-rate college. It is also to be said that Harvard usu-

ally requires men coming from whatsoever college, either to stand examinations for admission to a certain class or to fall back at least one year. To change from one college of a certain grade to another college of the same grade is easy; but it is not usually wise.

SPECIALIZATION IN COLLEGE.

The student before he enters college, or his parent in his behalf, frequently inquires "How early should a specialty be developed?" The likeness of men to each other in college is one of the significant elements. On the whole, men seem a good deal like each other in their taste for different studies. Of course, there are certain ones who abhor mathematics, and also certain ones who are fond of mathematics. Certain ones excel in linguistic studies, and others there are who find the languages difficult. But there does come a time when a man should begin to develop a special relation to his probable work in life. It is fortunate, indeed, that the studies which fit for one of the two or three more common callings, fit for the others also. The same preliminary study that fits one for the law, fits one also for the ministry, and also for journalism, with a few slight qualifications and exceptions. If a student propose to be a lawyer he should devote a large part of his college time to the study of philosophy, constitutional law, political science, and history; if a student propose to be a minister, he should devote his study to the same subjects and in almost the same proportion; if one propose to be a journalist, it would be difficult for him to lay out for himself a better course of study in the last two years of his course than is embodied in these same subjects, though he should emphasize history and social science. Furthermore, if one is to enter into business,

he will find the study of history, of economics, and of philosophy the best subjects to occupy himself with. If, however, one is to be a doctor, he should devote himself to physics, chemistry, and biology in the last two years. But it is a satisfaction to know that men who propose to be doctors usually indicate a preference for this most specialized profession as early as the middle of the course, and are able therefore with foreknowledge to specialize their work. Therefore, if a student show as early as the beginning of the junior year what his conspicuous ability may be or what may be his particular liking, the time is sufficiently early. If one have no liking at all, and no preference for one study above another, the method which Maria Mitchell adopted, with reference to the students of Vassar College, is as good as any. She reports herself as saying to her students: "When a student asks me 'What specialty shall I follow?' I answer, 'Adopt some one, if none draws you, and wait.' I am confident that she will find the specialty engrossing."

After this long discussion of well-nigh a score of the questions which a parent considers in choosing a college, I have only one more inquiry to propose: "What will my son be good for when he graduates?" The answer, father and mother, depends altogether upon your son. He may be good for anything; he may be good — but seldom does it occur — for nothing. He probably will be good for something. The college, if it has done its full duty to him, has not fitted him for his profession; it has not fitted him for the ministry: it has only fitted him to fit himself for the ministry. It has not fitted him to practise law: it has fitted him to begin the study of law. It has not fitted him to be a physician: it has fitted him to prepare himself to be a

doctor. It has even not fitted him to be a college teacher, as the old college did; but it has fitted him to take graduate work for two or three years, in order to become a college teacher. But what is more important than any of these special works that the college has done, if the college has done its duty to him, and if he has done his duty to the college and to himself, your son is a gentleman. He is also a thinker. He is also a noble citizen. He is also more or less of a scholar. But, supplementing all these elements and mightier than any one of them, the boy who has gone to college a boy and has come out of college a man, is *fitted for life.* For the college is a professional school for life itself. Possibly one would prefer to say, college is life.

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